Amendments to the Specification:

Please delete the title in it's entirety and replace with the following amended title:

CLASSIFICATION OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGES USING A HIERARCHY OF RULE SETS

Please replace the paragraph, beginning at page 3, line 13, with the following rewritten paragraph:

It is increasingly common for organizations to receive up to hundreds of thousands of electronic messages each day, each message requiring classification into one or more of typically hundreds of different categories. To perform message categorization, a text analyzer would typically apply a set of several hundred rules to each message, the final classification of each message being derived from a combination of the results the application of all of the rules to that message. Conventionally, a flat rule structure is employed meaning that each rule is given equal weight and is applied in sequence to each message, one message at a time. This requires a large amount of computer processing power ~~which~~ that can lead to unacceptable delays in dealing with incoming messages.

Please insert the following paragraph after page 9, line 22.

As described below with reference to Fig. 2, the e-mail server is also configured to receive reply messages 13 via a mail client 21 coupled to the global computer network 14.

Please replace the paragraph, beginning at page 12, line 27, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The text analyzer 36 is preferably of the type which includes a rule engine (not shown). The ~~IMB~~ IBM Mail Analyzer is an example of such a text ~~analyser~~ analyzer 36. The text analyzer 36 is therefore associated with a set of rules which it uses, in conjunction with the rule engine, to evaluate the content of an electronic message 12. In an alternative embodiment, the text analyzer and the rule engine may be separate modules arranged for co-operation with one another. Typically, a rule comprises a conditional statement whereby an assertion is made if a condition is met. The condition is typically the presence in the message content of a particular

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alphanumeric text string or character string. The assertion is typically that the message 12 belongs, or may belong, to a particular category, or categories. Thus, to evaluate a rule, the text analyzer examines the message content, using conventional text analysis methods, searching for the presence of the particular string, or strings of text upon which said rule is conditional. In the simplistic banking example, one rule may stipulate that if the text string "balance" appears in the message 12, then the message 12 falls in the balance enquiry category. As second rule may stipulate that if the text strings "funds" and "transfer" appear in the message 12, then the message 12 falls in the funds transfer category, and so on. In practice, there may be hundreds of rules in a set and more than one rule may be required to be met before the text ~~analyser~~ analyzer 36 determines that a message 12 falls within a particular category.

Please replace the paragraph, beginning at page 27, line 4, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Also, the invention is described herein in the context of processing electronic messages (such as ~~e-Mails~~emails) asynchronously but it will be appreciated that the invention is also suitable for processing electronic messages synchronously or real-time.

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